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MILITARY SPIRIT DECLINING IN FRANCE.—There are many indications that, notwithstanding the vast military establishments of France, the military spirit is declining among the people. Historians have at length commenced to write the real history of the wars of the First Empire, and to deal freely with the character of Napoleon; and deep is the impression made on the public mind. The theatre is a pretty good test of the bent of a nation; and for the last ten years the soldier has been gradually disappearing from the French stage. The soldier held the theatre a good many years. Napoleon started him to excite his legions against the English; but since the conclusion of peace with Austria, the military drama, even accompanied by splendid scenic effect, has met with no success. Some of the episodes of the Mexican campaign might have furnished matter for a popular drama in other days; but the subject has been left untouched out of deference to the tastes of the epoch.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

MILITARY PUNISHMENTS.

FLOGGING IN THE ENGLISH NAVY.

The severity of these punishments has been much mitigated since the rise of peace societies; but the following extracts from a work by a surgeon in the British navy will show that they are even now barbarous and brutal, a disgrace to the civilization of the age.

"I do not believe I shall ever forget the first flogging I attended on board my own ship; not that the spectacle was in any way more revolting than seores I have since witnessed, but because the sight was new to me. I remember it wanted fully twenty minutes of seven in the morning when my servant aroused me. 'Why so early to-day?' I inquired. 'A flaying match, you know, sir,' said Jones. I hurried, and, dressing myself as if for a holiday, in cocked hat, sword and undress coat, I went on deck. The morning was cool' and clear, the hills clad in lilac and green, seabirds floating high in the air, and the waters of the bay reflecting the blue of the sky and the lofty mountain sides, forming a picture almost dreamlike in its quietness and serenity. The men were standing about in groups, dressed in their whitest of pantaloons, bluest of smocks, and neatest of black silk neckerchiefs.

By and by the culprit was led aft by a file of marines; and I went below with him to make the preliminary examination, in order to report whether or not he might be fit for the punishment. He was as good a specimen of the British marine as one could wish to look upon, hardy, bold, and wiry. His crime had been smuggling spirits on board. "Need n't examine me, doctor," said he, "I ain't afraid of their four dozen; they can't hurt me, sir,—leastways my back, you know—my breast though!" and he shook his head, rather sadly I thought, as he bent down his eyes. "What," said I, "have you anything the matter with your chest?" "Nay, doctor, nay; it's my feels they'll hurt. I've a little girl at home that loves me, and—bless you, sir, I won't look her in the face again no-how." I felt his pulse. No lack of strength there, no nervousness; the artery had the firm beat of health, the tendons felt like rods of iron beneath the finger, and his biceps stood out hard and round as the mainstay of an old seventy-four. I pitied the brave fellow, and—very wrong of me it was, but I could not help it—filled out and offered him a large glass of rum. "Ah! sir," he said, with a wistful eye on the ruby liquid, "don't tempt me, sir. I can bear the bit o' flaying atabout that; I wouldn't have my messmates smell Dutch courage on my breath, sir; thankee all the same, Doctor."

He walked on deck and surrendered himself. All hands had already assembled, the men and boys on one side, and the officers, in cocked hats and swords, on the other. A grating had been lashed against the bulwark, and another placed on deck beside it. The culprit's shoulders and back were bared, and a strong belt fastened around the lower part of the loins for protection. He was then firmly tied by the hands to the upper, and by the feet to the lower grating; a little basin of cold water was placed at his feet; and all was now prepared. The sentence was read, and orders given to proceed with the punishment.

The cat is a terrible instrument of torture; I would not use it on a bull unless in self-defence. The shaft is about a foot and a half long, and covered with green or red baize according to taste. The thongs are nine, about twenty-eight inches in length, of the thickness of a goose-quill, and with two knots tied on each. Men describe the first blow as like a shower of molten lead. Combing out the thongs with his five fingers before each blow, firmly and determinedly was the first dozen delivered by the bo'swain's mate, and as unflinchingly received. Then, "One dozen, sir, please," he reported, saluting the commander. "Continue the punishment," was the calm reply. A new man and a new cat. Another dozen reported; again the same reply. Three dozen. The flesh, like burning steel, had now changed from red to purple, and blue and white; and between the third and fourth dozen, the suffering wretch, pale enough now, and in all probability sick, begged a comrade to give him a mouthful of water. There was a tear in the eye of the hardy sailor who obeyed him, whispering, as he did so, "Keep up, Bill; it'll soon be over now." "Five, six," the corporal slowly counted, "seven, eight." It is the last dozen and how acute must be the torture! "Nine, ten." The blood comes now fast enough, and—yes, gentle reader, I will spare your feelings.

The man was cast loose at last, and put on the sick-list. He had borne his punishment without a groan, and without moving a muscle. Tommy G—— was a pretty, fair-skinned, blue-eyed boy, some sixteen summers old. He was one of a class only too common in the service. Having become enamoured of the sea, he had run away from his home, and joined the service; and, poor little man! he found out when too late that the stern realities of a sailor's life did not at all accord with the golden notions he had formed of it. Fond of stowing himself away in corners with a book, instead of keeping his watch, Tommy very often got into disgrace, spent much of his time at the masthead, and had many unpleasant encounters with the corporal's cane.

One day, his watch being over, he had retired to a corner with his little "ditty-box." Nobody ever knew one-half of the beloved knicknacks and valued nothings he kept in that wee box; it was, in fact, his private cabin, his sanctum sanctorum, to which he could retreat when anything vexed him; a sort of portable home, in which he could forget the toils of his weary watch, the giddy masthead, or even the corporal's cane. He had extracted, and was dreamily gazing on, the portrait of a very young lady, when the corporal came up and rudely seized it, and made a very rough and inelegant remark concerning the fair virgin. "That is my sister," cried Tommie, with tears in his eyes. "Your sister!" sneered the corporal; "she is a —" and he added a word that cannot be named. There was the spirit of Young England, however, in Tommie's breast, when those lips, and his nose too, were dyed in the blood the boy's fist had drawn.

For that blow poor Tommie was condemned to receive four dozen lashes. And the execution of the sentence was carried out with all the pomp and show usual on such occasions. Arrayed in cocked-hats, epaulettes, and swords, we

all assembled to witness that helpless child in his agony. One would have thought that even the rough bo'swain's mate would have hesitated to disfigure skin so white and tender, or that the frightened and imploring glance Tommie cast upward on the first descending lash would have unnerved his arm. Did it? No, reader; pity there doubtless was among us, but mercy—none. Oh! we were a brave band. And the poor boy writhed in his agony; his screams and cries were heartrending; and, God forgive us! we knew not till then he was an orphan, till we heard him beseech his mother in heaven to look down on her son, to pity and support him. Ah! well, perhaps she did, for scarcely had the third dozen commenced when Tommie's cries were hushed, his head drooped on his shoulder like a little dead bird's, and for a while his sufferings were at an end. I gladly took the opportunity to report further proceedings as dangerous, and he was taken away to his hammock.

FOOTPRINTS OF LOVE.

Life beareth many footprints
On the golden sands of time;
Footprints of high and noble deeds,
And, alas! of many a crime.

Footprints of kings and warriors,
Of the conquerors of earth;
Footprints of busy little feet,
Gathering around the hearth.

Footprints of stern, high daring,
And of deeds as soft and mild;
But the sweetest footprints I have seen,
Were those of a little child.

The little steps went in
A dungeon wall'd around;
They went with gathered flowers, to cheer
A prisoner chained and bound.

The little voice was heard
In whispers soft and low;
And the little hand was gently laid
On a dark and troubled brow.

And trembling words lisped forth
The Saviour's precious name,
Till o'er that captive's sullen mood
Repentant feelings came.

And the little steps went out,
But the footprints long remained;
Remained, too, in the softened heart
Of that prisoner bound and chained.

Footprints there are in time,
But not in time alone;
Eternity, in living light,
Those blessed steps will own.

Then, little one, go thou,
And do some loving thing;
Leave footprints on the sands of time,
Whence blessed fruits may spring.

WHAT THE BIRDS SAID.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

The birds, against the April wind,
Flew northward, singing as they flew;
They sang, "The land we leave behind
Has swords for corn-blades, blood for dew."

O wild birds, flying from the South,
What saw and heard ye, gazing down?
"We saw the mortar's upturned mouth,
The sickened camp, the blazing town!

"Beneath the bivouac's starry lamps,
We saw your march-worn children die;
In shrouds of moss, in cypress swamps,
We saw your dead uncoffined lie.

"We heard the starving prisoner's sighs,
And saw, from line and trench, your sons
Follow our flight with home-sick eyes
Beyond the battery's smoking guns."

And heard and saw ye only wrong
And pain, I cried, O wing-worn flocks?
"We heard," they sang, "The Freedman's song,
The crash of Slavery's broken locks!"

"We saw from new, uprising States,
The Treason-nursing mischief spurned,
As, crowding Freedom's ample gates,
The longestranged and lost returned.

"O'er dusky faces, seamed and old
Ands hands horn-hard with unpaid toil,
With hope in every rustling fold,
We saw your star-dropped flag uncoil.

"And, struggling up through sounds accursed,
A grateful murmur climb the air,
A whisper scarcely heard at first,
It filled the listening Heavens with prayer.

"And sweet and far, as from a star,
Replied a voice which shall not cease,
Till, drowning all the noise of war,
It sings the blessed songs of peace!"

So to me in a doubtful day
Of chill and slowly-greening spring,
Low stooping from the cloudy gray,
The wild-birds sang, or seemed to sing.

They vanished in the misty air,
The song went with them in their flight;
But lo! they left the sunset fair,
And in the evening there was light.

NAPOLÉON.—It seems that a commission was appointed in France to publish the correspondence of Napoleon I.; but his letters revealed such a continued record of selfishness, deceit, and most despicable treachery, that the plan has been abandoned for the present. The history of war and warriors, the staple of nearly all history, is little else than an attempt to palliate and glorify just such wholesale villains as this Napoleon.